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Listing Homosexuals since the 1920s and under State Socialism in Hungary¹

Judit Takács

Histories of gender, sexuality and the body can employ comparison across space, as in the last chapter, but also over time. The example used in this chapter, historical evidence about 'lists of homosexuals' compiled for official state use in Hungary from the early 20th century onwards, reveals what can be gained by studying a topic such as the control of homosexuality under different political regimes rather than beginning and ending every study at points of political rupture such as the establishment or fall of state socialism. At the centre of the chapter is a special list of 993 alleged homosexuals, found annexed to correspondence between the Hungarian security services and the Minister of Defence in 1942 which contemplated whether to use homosexuals as forced labourers within the wartime Labour Service System. This discussion took place under the authoritarian right-wing regime of Miklós Horthy. Yet the practice of special state surveillance on homosexuality both persisted after the Communist takeover of Hungary – when compiling 'homosexual inventories' of potential blackmail victims who could be coerced into becoming police informers was part of regular police work in urban areas, especially in the capital, Budapest – and dated back to the police practice of late Habsburg Hungary. The complexities of this history would not be seen in research that concentrated only on state socialism.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Hungary was still part of the Habsburg Empire, which had been divided into Austrian and Hungarian halves since the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 inaugurated the so-called 'age of dualism'. Hungary thus had complete independence regarding domestic policy, but surrendered state sovereignty in foreign and military policy to the Empire.² Hungary's 1878 Penal Code (created by one secretary of state at the Ministry of the Interior, Károly Csemegi) was part of this system. Paragraph 241 of the Csemegi Code rendered unnatural fornication – or literally 'perversion against nature' (*természet elleni fajtalanság*), a term with unspecified content – an illegal act punishable by up to one year's imprisonment.



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Hungary's 1878 Penal Code would outlast World War I and Habsburg rule itself. After the last Habsburg emperor, Charles I of Austria (Charles IV of Hungary), abdicated in November 1918, the first Hungarian Republic was formed in the spring of 1919, leading to the first 'Communist experiment' in Hungary (a Soviet-type republic with proletarian dictatorship) and then a counter-revolution that lasted until March 1920. Miklós Horthy, whose regime re-established the monarchy without a king but with Horthy as regent, remained in power until 15 November 1944.³ The Csemegi Code of 1878 was still in place in March 1944, when the Germans occupied Hungary.

Even after the liberation (or occupation) of Hungary by the Red Army, the Code remained in place. It was in force between 1945 and 1948, when 'tentative democracy' turned into Communist rule; during the Rákosi era, a 'totalitarian reign of terror' between 1948 and 1956,⁴ named after the General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party, Mátyás Rákosi, who liked to refer to himself as Stalin's best pupil;⁵ and during the 1950s, even during the 1956 revolution, the greatest attempt at destalinization in the region. It was only in 1961, early in the era of János Kádár (General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party between 1956 and 1988), that the unnatural fornication clause changed. The 1960s seem to have brought the aggressive prosecution of homosexuals to a halt; however, the long tradition of specialized state surveillance of homosexuality was still able to continue after 1961.

20th-century Hungarian legislation, by rendering homosexual activities illicit, provided a sufficient basis for developing a state-run system of social control and surveillance of homosexual people or, more precisely, of people who could be suspected of being homosexual. Representations of same-sex desires were rare under state socialism in Hungary, as they were in other 'iron-curtained' countries,⁶ at least in public – though certain kinds of representations of same-sex desires were quite well documented in secret police and state security files. Historical recollections of same-sex desire were often sporadic and piecemeal, reflecting the desires of men more than those of women, whose same-sex identifications and practices left few detectable marks in the public realm. The state's recognition and representation of same-sex desire, through the practice of police keeping lists of male homosexuals, show that in this semi-public, semi-private setting, same-sex desires were already being both recognized and misrecognized during the first half of the 20th century, and that these processes were not discontinued at all for most of the rest of the century.

Policing and Listing

Soon after the establishment of the Budapest Metropolitan Police in 1873, when the formerly independent municipalities of Pest, Buda and Óbuda were unified, a Criminal Investigation Department (*Detektív Osztály*) was formed in 1885 and introduced a local criminal registry system on the basis of detectives' private notes. The registry initially had four main sections (records of ex-offenders and wanted criminals; records of those on conditional release; a list of stolen items; and a collection of police bulletins), while in 1887 a portrait register of convicted criminals was also added. It took about two decades to create the National

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Office of Criminal Records (*Országos Bűnügyi Nyilvántartó Hivatal*) on 1 January 1909: by this time the local criminal records included 148,273 individual profiles and 18,563 fingerprint files.⁷ Fingerprinting as a means of identifying criminals started to come into effect in Budapest in 1902.⁸ In 1914, when the First International Criminal Police Congress was organized in Monaco, the participants adopted the principle of creating a *casier central international* (centralized international record system), leading to the establishment of INTERPOL in 1923.⁹ Representatives of the National Office of Criminal Records took part in the Monaco congress, which also reflected the office's increasing professionalization. Hungarian criminal records were now also part of an international system of control.

In 1926, one of the first books to be fully devoted to the modern aspects of the 'homosexuality problem' was published in Budapest. Its author, Dr György Pál, described homosexuality as having recurred suddenly after World War I as a mass phenomenon and as a 'burning issue of the modern era' that could not be ignored in Hungary either.¹⁰ In the view of the author,¹¹ whose work can be interpreted as pleading against the criminalization of homosexuality, the broader context of these developments was a reflex-like reaction to the overexerted maleness of the war: the male world had thus become overfeminized, while the female world had become over-masculinized by trying to exhibit the modern boyish image, recognizing that 'it is in fact the boy who is the real ideal of men'.¹² The rapid expansion of homosexual life, the 'great homosexual tide flooding Budapest',¹³ was presented as an inherent feature of global urbanization and as a parallel development to those shaping Budapest into a world-class metropolis. In Pál's estimate, by the 1920s the number of *urnings*¹⁴ (*a reference to men who loved other men, belonging to a transitional third gender*) was more than 10,000 in Budapest. They had several venues to meet and interact at, including bath houses and steam baths, as well as inner-city locations (such as Kálvin Square, Erzsébet Square, Emke Corner or the Buda side of the Margaret Bridge), most of which would remain popular cruising areas for several decades.

In comparison to villages, Pál explained, Budapest and other big cities could provide a more inciting environment for homosexuals to shift away from introverted passive sexuality and start exploring an extroverted active sex life. The main urban advantage was the immense ease of disappearance that could protect one from the dangers of blackmail in a city of a million people. The post-war shortage of housing was another reason that could leave the family-like cohabitation of same-sex partners unremarkable, as rooms for rent were often advertised for two gentlemen together. Additionally, the density of monosexual contact characterizing work-life socialization in some occupations, when most of the work time was spent in an exclusively same-sex environment (such as in the case of footmen and servants or seamstresses), could be identified as a hot bed for homosexualization – especially when access to potential different-sex partners was very limited for class-specific as well as financial reasons.

A few years later, a group of journalists and police officers published a two-volume work on 'modern criminality' (*A modern bűnözés*).¹⁵ Here, in the section 'Circumstances That Promote Crime', a whole chapter was devoted to

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homosexuality, or more precisely its punishment and cure.¹⁶ Following the aetiology of the psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing, the authors distinguished between acquired and inborn forms of homosexuality, and pointed out that at the beginning of their homosexual career people with acquired homosexuality did not yet have that 'unbelievable and unexplainable skill with which they are able to recognise each other'. Thus sometimes they wrongly pursued 'normal men', who would be 'naturally repulsed' or even report them to the police: 'These unsuccessful attempts bring them to those well-known places, where the pathologically inclined ones and especially their scum' gather – public toilets, parks and public bath houses – where they could find suitable partners; however, they could also fall into the hands of extortionists and male prostitutes.¹⁷ Men with congenital homosexuality could be categorized into active *urnings* and passive effeminate homosexuals who could live together in a household as husband and wife; however, 'their family life can last only up to a maximum of two or three years', because they were unable to remain faithful.¹⁸

The authors of *A modern bílnözés* estimated that the proportion of homosexuals used to be 0.5 per cent of the population, but, due to the Great War and the accompanying long terms of internment for prisoners of war, this rate had recently increased to 1 per cent. In modern big cities the homosexual rate could be even higher. For example, the male population of Budapest was 438,456 in 1925, while the number of homosexual men could be estimated at more than 5,000,¹⁹ or at least 1.14 per cent.

A modern bílnözés also presented a statistical register, compiled between 1926 and 1929, of 2,000 homosexual men living in Budapest 'whose homosexuality is undeniable'.²⁰ This contained information on their ages, marital status, occupations and whether they had criminal records.²¹ The authors claimed that no data had been collected previously and so the increasing proportion of homosexuals since the war could not be exactly determined. Even though no exact details were provided on how the reported information was gained, it can be assumed that police files were used as main sources of information, but the exact procedures are not at all clear.²² The authors referred to the fact that out of the 2,000 examined men 345 already had a criminal record, and additionally there were a few hundred cases pending – however, they also added that 'even though perversion against nature was committed by all of them, there were only a few who were convicted on this basis',²³ as there had been very few reports of perversion against nature. Homosexuals reported each other to the authorities only because of revenge, the authors explained, and homosexuals approached 'normal men' only very rarely because they could sense whom they could approach. Even if a homosexual man did approach a normal man, they added, it would in any case be unsuccessful – so legally it would be defined only as attempted perversion against nature, on the basis of which convictions were rarely made in court.²⁴

Additionally, it was made clear that the 2,000 homosexual cases did not include any prostitutes. The police had a separate file on cases of homosexual prostitution: since 1924 more than 400 men had such a police record, including 281 recidivists. The problem with homosexual prostitution was presented in a way that emphasized its dangers: 'Today there are homosexual prostitutes in all

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big cities, who are involved in much more criminality and cause much more trouble than their female colleagues. Male prostitution is secretive, uncontrollable and thus specifically in need of persecution'.²⁵

In 1933, a practising doctor of the Royal Hungarian Public Health Institute published a study that was fully devoted to the issue of homosexual male prostitution: his Hungarian data source was a secret police file of 1932, containing a list of 1,695 male homosexual prostitutes.²⁶ The secret police file listed mainly men aged between 18 and 30, but also 64 boys younger than 18, though the author added that the number of those younger than 18 did not reflect reality. Their number was apparently much higher, but 'for philanthropic reasons [the authorities] try to defer the registration of juvenile homosexuals until they see no hope that they can improve by leaving this lifestyle behind'.²⁷

The author of this study, Jenő Szántó, used a broader definition of prostitution than the legal definition then in force in Hungary, and defined it as a person making their body available for the lust of others in order to gain financial profit or social advantage or both. However, it should be observed that in a social context where, as Szántó stated, homosexual activities 'clash with the dominant moral views, being despised and detested by heterosexuals, persecuted by the state, proscribed by religious rules and punishable by the law',²⁸ the luxury of having a same-sex sexual partner was reserved for those with greater social advantages. The study distinguished two main groups of male homosexual prostitutes: the first one was the group of 'honest' homosexual prostitutes, recruited from among homosexual men, led by the same desire as their clients, with whom their interaction was characterized by 'the economically stronger party supporting the economically weaker one'.²⁹ It also pointed out that, in contrast to female prostitution, return to respectable society was possible for those who have become too old for that job but were being provided for by their friends, so for them plenty of other career options were still open. The second homosexual prostitution category was that of the '*Strichjunge*' or profit-seeking boys, whose main profit was made in fact not from actual prostitution but from blackmail. Homosexual prostitution could be linked to certain localities, including popular clubs, cafés, pubs and bars, as well as steam baths, beaches and the promenades on the banks of the Danube, and squares with busy public toilets (for example, at Kálvin Square, Berlini Square (now Nyugati Square), Erzsébet Square and Emke Corner).

In the same year, the same author published another study on homosexuality in Budapest in *Bőrgyógyászati, Urológiai és Venerológiai Szemle (Review of Dermatology, Urology and Venereology)*. This included a list of 3,425 homosexual men,³⁰ gathered through 'special data collection', the exact nature of which was not detailed.³¹ However, it can be assumed that the sources of data were police files, as the author points out that the number of known homosexuals had almost doubled since 1929, when the police superintendent József Vogl (author of the chapter on homosexuality in *A modern bűnözés*) had reported on the personal data of 2,000 homosexual men living in Budapest.

In 1934, Zoltán Nemes-Nagy, a Hungarian psychiatrist and neurologist, devoted a whole chapter of his study of sexual pathology to 'Homosexuals in Budapest', as well as a chapter on 'Homosexual Women' and another one on

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‘Punishment of Homosexuals in the Past and Today’. The ‘Homosexuals in Budapest’ chapter listed well-known homosexual meeting places, including bath houses, public beaches with separate cabins, the surroundings of public toilets and steam chambers with limited lighting.³² In fact, this part of the book resembles a present-day gay guide, providing detailed information on venues such as Erzsébet Square, where homosexuals gathered in groups on benches around the public toilet; bath houses with steam chambers such as the Rác, Király, Lukács and Kazinczy Baths, and previously (before too many light bulbs had been installed) the Császár Bath; the public toilets at Kálvin Square, the corner of Teréz Boulevard and Király Street, Emke Corner; the little park at the Elisabeth Bridge on the Buda side around the fountain and under the bridge; at the Keleti railway station on the departures side; and the Sasfészek, a homosexual restaurant in Buda. However, the author also emphasized that Budapest was ‘the first metropolitan city in the whole world where semi-official records [had been] compiled on homosexuals’ for about 15 years, and thus Budapest police had data on about 5,000 men, including ‘mainly passive homosexuals and those, who commit unnatural fornication for material interest’.³³ The author estimated ‘the real number’ of homosexual men in Budapest at about 15,000, most of whom would never be detected as they belonged to ‘upscale circles, carefully trying to avoid publicity and any kind of scandal leading to the police’.³⁴ Social phenomena consisting of disorders of people’s sexual life as well as the rise of various perversions were interpreted by another contemporary Hungarian neurologist, Sándor Feldmann, as features of a grave crisis.³⁵ The great extent to which homosexuality developed in the case of both sexes was seen by him to be caused by the very serious economic situation and the ‘painfully limited social freedom of the sexes’: thus, he explained, it was not surprising that people tried to ‘find relief in excessive work and the pursuit of artificial pleasure’.³⁶

By the 1920s, the population of Budapest had already grown to over a million and the city faced metropolitan problems related to its fast growth, such as having inappropriately functioning political institutions and a physical infrastructure that to a large extent derived from the disproportion characterizing the relations of the capital city and the rest of the country. Urban historians explain this disproportionate relationship by pointing to historical facts: ‘The savage dismantling of the territory which had been Hungarian before the [First World] War, reducing the country to a third of its former size, was to leave Budapest as a hydrocephalus, at least 15 times larger than the next largest Hungarian town’.³⁷ In the 1930s Budapest became a spatially ordered modern city; that is, it was characterized by specialized uses of public space, serving mainly the interest of the higher middle classes.³⁸ While for most urbanites meeting – cultural and biographical – strangers, coming from previously separate real and symbolic worlds was merely an unavoidable concomitant of living in a modern city, for homosexual life the emergence of the unique social psychological space of the public realm provided a previously unknown dynamic.³⁹ In big cities like Budapest with established meeting places and patterns of decodable behaviour, a same-sex attracted person could submerge in the world of strangers, and could try to act more openly as a homosexual – not just to be one.

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Continuity During and After the Second World War

A document from 1942 recently recovered in the Hungarian War Archive (*Hadtörténelmi Levéltár*) contributes to the still very scarce historical evidence that during World War II homosexuals were also targets of life-threatening state control in Hungary: it is a list of altogether 993 alleged homosexuals that was attached to the correspondence between the State Security Centre and the Minister of Defence contemplating whether or not to use them as forced labourers within the wartime Labour Service System.⁴⁰ The obligation of home-defence-related labour service (*honvédelmi munkakötelezettség*), a special phenomenon of the Horthy regime, had originally been introduced by Act No. II of 1939 on Home Defence, and in 1942 the 69059/1942 Decree of the Minister of Defence extended the scope of the law to all Jewish men aged between 18 and 48. The aim of the wartime Labour Service System was to keep the politically unreliable elements of society – primarily Jews, but also Communists and members of non-Hungarian ethnic groups – away from armed military service and at the same time to force them to take part in the war effort. This is how the unarmed home defence labour service came into being, leading to the death of thousands of forced labourers who were sent to the front lines without sufficient equipment and supplies.

The correspondence, consisting of altogether four letters and two attached lists, started on 7 November 1942 with a proposal on behalf of the State Security Centre (part of the Ministry of Home Affairs),⁴¹ addressing the Minister of Defence as follows:

Please, call up into the home defence labour service the homosexual individuals, being unreliable regarding public morality, located within the territory of the capital, Budapest, listed in the attached register. Please, inform us about your Honour's decision.

High-ranking officers at the Ministry of Defence disagreed with the proposal that homosexuals, being residents of and registered by the police at Budapest, should be called into the 'home defence labour service' by pointing out that:

it would not be desirable to look for solutions in the military line: this issue requires an explicit policing (administrative) solution as there is no hope of changing the character of these degenerated neurotic individuals.

It was also added that there was:

an increasing tendency to offer the scum of the population for military use, while these procedures would hurt the feelings of those other impeccable individuals who participate in the war, when they see that the [military] service has primarily a punitive character.

Additionally, one officer made the following note in handwriting: 'It is undoubtedly useful, if mainly the nationally useless elements decay...'. Another lieutenant referred in a handwritten comment to the possibility of collecting

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homosexuals into special labour force companies and employing them outside the country's borders; however:

in this case they would get into the same category with those being unreliable regarding national loyalty, thus the question emerges: "would it be useful to make all these men meet and get to know each other more closely? *I certainly wouldn't advise that*" (my emphasis).⁴²

Nevertheless, on 11 November 1942 another short letter arrived from the State Security Centre, addressed again to the Minister of Defence, requesting similar treatment for an additional 184 men besides those 810 alleged homosexuals whose data had already been sent on 7 November. The two lists consisted of data on altogether 993 men, including their names, places and dates of birth, religious denominations, family status, occupations, fathers' first names (or indications of illegitimacy), mothers' names and (possibly their last known) addresses. Data on two further individuals is literally missing because the paper part of their records had been cut out with scissors 'on the basis of a conversation with the Chief Commissioner', as handwritten margin notes testify.

Most of these men were in their late 20s (with an average age of 29, ranged between the age of 16 and 48), and worked as manual labourers (about 160 of them were farm hands and about 80 worked in commerce); there were only a very few intellectuals and artists among them (for example, three actors, eight musicians and only one journalist). Of the 993 men, 29 were married, 46 had been illegitimate children and 37 had their address given as prison. Regarding religious affiliation there were 629 Roman Catholics, 167 Jews, 127 Calvinists, 24 Evangelicals and 19 Greek Catholics – these numbers are in line with the division of denominations in the population of Budapest in the early 1940s.⁴³

It is a matter of concern that the origin of these lists cannot be established. It can be supposed, however, that they came from police files, and the phrase 'officially registered homosexuals' used in the correspondence supports this supposition. The final item of the correspondence, as far as it has come to light, is a reply of 3 December 1942 from the Minister of Defence to the Minister of Home Affairs, stating that 'I have no means to follow your Honour's recommendation to take these homosexual individuals into military service'. So far, these are the only known documents that can provide a link between the history of homosexuality in Hungary and the Holocaust, and this link is not a very strong one because at present, apart from archival documents about criminal court cases, there is no historical data available to find out what happened in Hungary during the 1940s to alleged homosexuals in general and these 993 listed men from Budapest in particular.

The practice of specialized state surveillance of homosexuality, meanwhile, persisted after World War II, especially during the rise of the Hungarian state socialist political system. Compiling 'homosexual inventories', which provided potential blackmail victims who could be coerced into becoming police informers, was part of regular police work in urban areas and especially in Budapest. These practices are reflected in archive documents of the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, including the National Police Headquarters

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instructions from 1958 on how to keep criminal records.⁴⁴ According to these instructions there were 13 types of criminal records, and data on homosexuals had to be kept in at least three of them, including the 'Preliminary Records of Persons Suspected of Crime'; the 'Record of Regular Criminals' and a photo register of convicted homosexuals. Preliminary records of homosexual persons suspected of crime were kept only in the capital city; this was not required in the countryside or in smaller cities and towns.

The goal of keeping a register of 'regular criminals' was to collect data on criminally active, socially seriously harmful persons with a criminal record. Regular criminals were defined as recidivists and those whose personal circumstances or the mode of perpetration could project repetition of crime, such as (in the case of homosexuals) prostitutes, offenders committing thefts against drunk people, swindlers and vagabonds. During the 1950s, the Police Chief of Budapest therefore had access to a special data set of persons with 'proved homosexual inclinations', including the circles of their friends who were also participating in perversion against nature, their photos, their nicknames and also their female nicknames, if they had any, as well as their 'method' of committing perversion against nature.

By the end of the 1950s, however, a change in official attitudes to homosexuality had emerged. Recently discovered archival records show that in 1958 the Health Science Council (*Egészségügyi Tudományos Tanács*) within the Ministry of Health unanimously supported a proposal to decriminalize unnatural fornication between consenting adults. The Council based its support on a medicalizing approach that defined homosexuality as a biological phenomenon which was not logical to persecute under the law, and it also acknowledged the increased vulnerability of homosexual men to blackmail, created and sustained by criminalization.⁴⁵ These arguments were reflected in the official ministerial standpoint, which emphasized that homosexuality was:

either an inborn sexual perversity rooted in a developmental disorder or such acquired anomaly that develops mainly within neurotic people as a result of some sort of sexual impression during childhood, adolescence or at a young age [...] and can therefore not be handled legally as a crime. Finally, in the course of its legal regulation the practical point should be considered that criminalization of such behaviour would provide a wide scope for blackmailing.⁴⁶

Homosexual activity between consenting adult men became decriminalized in 1961. Nevertheless, different ages of consent were set for heterosexual and homosexual relationships, and this remained the case until 2002: while the age of consent for heterosexual relationships became and remained 14 in 1961, the age of consent for homosexual relationships was set at the age of 20 in 1961 and at 18 between 1978 and 2002.⁴⁷ Additionally, the circle of potential perpetrators and victims also changed in 1961. Men and women could now equally be prosecuted for 'perversion against nature', as long as the conduct had been with another person ('perversion against nature' conducted with an animal was no longer penalized). Furthermore, a special clause was introduced to cover 'perversion against nature conducted in a scandalous manner', carrying up to three

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years' imprisonment. The law did not specify what counted as 'scandalous', though court reports suggested that judges applied the clause if, among other circumstances, a third party could have witnessed the 'perversion'. The age of consent and potential public scandal clauses, in particular, provided good opportunities for state authorities such as the police – as well as extortionists at an interpersonal level – to keep (alleged) homosexual practices under close control. With the compilation of 'homosexual inventories' providing information on potential blackmail victims (and potential police informers) having been part of regular police work, especially in urban areas, since at least the 1920s, the long tradition of specialized state surveillance of homosexuality could even continue after 1961.

Evidence also shows how the collection of incriminating data could be put into practice, for example in the process of recruiting police informers. In a textbook from 1965 used by the Department of Political Investigation of the Police Academy, the whole process of police informant recruitment was described in a way reminiscent of a truth-producing therapeutic session:⁴⁸ the more incriminating evidence, the higher the chance of success. It was important for the recruiting officer to give an impression of expertise, with thorough knowledge of the incriminating details against the informer candidate and the relevant pieces of legislation (an example was given: that of a priest informer who had had sexual relationships with five women with the police having firm evidence about two). The informer candidate had to be invited for a private talk but it had to be left open exactly what kind of crime they were suspected of. During this session, the recruiting officer had to avoid reacting snobbishly, triumphantly or sarcastically to the admissions, self-struggles and problems of the candidate. Instead, officers should present themselves as if they appreciated the candidate's honesty and current difficult situation, and declare that the law provided for the punitive process to be stopped if the candidate gave their full admission and repentance. The candidate would then be asked to give testimony about his/her companions' hostile behaviour, providing the authorities with additional incriminating data about others.

These incriminating details, the candidate's first 'minor task', had to be given in writing and could be of major assistance in future police work. Complete discretion – at least towards the candidate – was assured. The recruiting police officer would condemn the acts the candidate had committed but at the same time show understanding of their situation, while the candidate could feel that it was not the main goal of the interrogator to send them to jail. At the end of the session, the candidate prepared a declaration in which it was emphasized that 'I repent the committed crimes and in order to make reparations I agree to cooperate with the political investigatory bodies. I understand that in return they will waive any punishment'. The process of recruiting an informant was complete. However, becoming a successful, fully fledged informant also involved doing the work not (only or mainly) because there was incriminating evidence against oneself but because of (political) conviction and commitment.

Besides its value in recruiting future police informers, incriminating data about alleged homosexuals could also be used for supposedly 'protecting the community' in criminal investigations. For example, attached to the police

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reports of one 1961 murder case was a list of 187 alleged homosexuals.⁴⁹ Official records showed the investigating detectives' main assumption was that the 71-year-old homosexual man (living in an elegant neighbourhood of Budapest) had been murdered by another (probably younger and poorer) homosexual. Thus the police could argue that they needed these practical homosexual lists to map the network of homosexuals known by the police, in order to speed up the investigations in the homosexual underworld of Budapest. This approach was based on a semi-hidden and semi-closed subcultural image of urban homosexuality, within which participants could quite easily navigate.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented historical evidence about the existence of 'lists of homosexuals' compiled for official state use in Hungary from at least the 1920s, and has introduced a special list of 993 alleged homosexuals from 1942 that can provide the only – currently known – link between the history of homosexuality in Hungary and the Holocaust. It has shown that before and after the World Wars, in different political regimes, homosexuality was controlled in 20th-century Hungary by quite similar means. Even after the general criminalization of homosexual acts ceased to exist in 1961, homosexuality carried such a heavy social stigma that it could still be used as an incriminating personal detail in recruiting potential police informers for at least two further decades. Homosexual lists could be used not only by the secret police but also by ordinary police detectives in their investigations, especially in homosexual murder cases, when looking for perpetrators to be caught and additional victims to be protected in a gloomy homosexual underworld. According to informal police reports and interviews conducted with elderly Hungarian gay men, this latter practice continued even after the change of political system in 1989–90.

Regimes of all different stripes in Hungary's turbulent 20th-century history, then, appeared to have made use of secret lists of sexually non-conforming men in order to oppress them and recruit them to perhaps spy on others as well. What becomes visible through the State Security archives, and what remains more difficult to perceive, has several implications for historians. Firstly, since women who had non-heteronormative desires and sexual practices were not persecuted in the same way as men, there are no such secret lists of them as far as we can tell today; nevertheless, their narratives remain a very much under-researched topic in Hungary and elsewhere.⁵⁰ Secondly, while the 20th century appears dominated by cisgender homogeneity for the most part, records suggest that requests to permit a change of gender on official records were apparently being granted even in the 1950s, at the height of Stalinism in Hungary, and these remarkable facts deserve to be further investigated. Thirdly, the extent and durability of Hungarian surveillance of homosexual men would make it worthwhile to investigate this topic in a wider central and eastern European context. The Hungarian records show that the lives of gay men in 20th-century Hungary were not as wholly invisible as one might think; in the eyes of the state, both before and during Communism, their lives were very visible indeed, another tension between public and private in the intimate politics of gender history.

Notes

1. This research was supported by Grant 105414 from the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund. The author gratefully acknowledges inspiring suggestions from Catherine Baker and the reviewers of this volume.
2. Zoltán Fónagy, 'The Age of Dualism', in István György Tóth (ed.), *A Concise History of Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina–Osiris, 2005), 425–35.
3. This period of Hungarian history is often described as a kingdom without a king, ruled by an admiral without a fleet, in a country without a coastline. The powers of the Regent were comparable to the legal position of a moderately powerful president – but as the 'Chief Warlord' the Regent had great influence over the army: Ignác Romsics, 'Hungary in Two World Wars', in Tóth (ed.), *A Concise History*.
4. György Gyarmati, 'Hungary in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century', in Tóth (ed.) *A Concise History*, 570.
5. Árpád Püskösti, *Rákosi, Sztálin legjobb tanítványa* (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 2004).
6. See, for example: Francesca Stella, *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
7. János Baksa, *Rendőrségi Almanach* (Budapest: A Rend kiadása – Stephaneum Nyomda és Könyvkiadó, 1923), 108.
8. Lajos Rác, 'A modern nagyvárosi rendőrség kialakulása és működése', in N. Kollár (ed.), *A fővárosi rendőrség története (1914-ig)* (Budapest: BRFK, 1995), 253–320.
9. Baksa, *Rendőrségi Almanach*, 127.
10. György Pál, *A homoszexuális probléma modern megvilágításban* (Budapest: Mai Henrik és Fia Orvosi Könyvkiadó, 1926), iii.
11. It cannot be determined precisely whether Pál was a legal or a medical expert; however, in light of the fact that the book was published by a 'medical publishing house', as stated on its cover, it seems to be more likely that he had a medical background.
12. Pál, *A homoszexuális probléma modern megvilágításban*, 78.
13. Pál, *A homoszexuális probléma modern megvilágításban*, 60.
14. The term, inspired by Plato's *Symposium*, was coined by the German jurist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs.
15. Gyula Turcsányi (ed.), *A modern bűnözés* (Budapest: Rozsnyai Károly Kiadása, 1929).
16. In the same section, other chapters were devoted to Prostitution, Drugs and Alcoholism.
17. Turcsányi (ed.), *A modern bűnözés*, 121.
18. Turcsányi (ed.), *A modern bűnözés*, 129.
19. Turcsányi (ed.), *A modern bűnözés*, 133.
20. Turcsányi (ed.), *A modern bűnözés*, 134.
21. According to marital status, 76 per cent of them were single, 18 per cent married, 3 per cent were widowers and 3 per cent were divorced. Regarding the occupational statistics, the authors voiced their view that among the 2,000 men they had examined there were exceptionally high numbers of those doing 'feminine work' such as cooks, confectioners, tailors, bakers, valets and nurses – as well as those who dealt with men in their work, such as barbers, men's tailors, waiters, bank clerks, masseurs, footmen, shop assistants specialized in menswear, teachers in boys' schools, and music teachers with male pupils. They also referred to the concordant

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- view of medical specialists in sexual pathologies that sedentary workers tended to have a greater libido and committed most of the sexual crimes. Thus it should not be a surprise that many of the homosexuals sat down while working: out of the 2,000 homosexual men, there were 70 shoemakers, 138 tailors and 254 civil servants: Turcsányi (ed.), *A modern bűnözés*, 138–40.
22. In a study published in 1933, this set of data is referred to as ‘statistics published by police superintendent József Vogl during the years of 1926–1929’: Jenő Szántó, ‘A homoszexualitásról, különös tekintettel a budapesti viszonyokra’, *Bőrgyógyászati, Urológiai és Venerológiai Szemle* no. 3 (1933), 43.
 23. Turcsányi (ed.), *A modern bűnözés*, 142.
 24. According to the authors there were several milder crimes that homosexuals did tend to commit, including theft and fraud, while crimes with physical harm were rarer. It was also emphasized, in a taken-for-granted sexist manner, that most homosexuals had a workless, inactive, slothful lifestyle and in general a lot of feminine characteristics.
 25. Turcsányi (ed.), *A modern bűnözés*, 143.
 26. Jenő Szántó, ‘A homoszexualis férfiprostitutio kérdése’, *Népegészségügy* no. 20–1 (1933), 7.
 27. Szántó, ‘A homoszexualis férfiprostitutio kérdése’, 9.
 28. Szántó, ‘A homoszexualis férfiprostitutio kérdése’, 3.
 29. Szántó, ‘A homoszexualis férfiprostitutio kérdése’, 5.
 30. This list, similarly to the list in *A modern bűnözés* in 1929, contained information on the age, marital status, occupation and the criminal record of persons. A new element of the 1932 list was information on religious affiliation.
 31. Szántó, ‘A homoszexualitásról, különös tekintettel a budapesti viszonyokra’; Jenő Szántó, ‘A homoszexualitásról, különös tekintettel a budapesti viszonyokra’, *Bőrgyógyászati, Urológiai és Venerológiai Szemle* no. 2 (1933).
 32. Zoltán Nemes-Nagy, *Katasztrófák a szerelmi életben*, vol. 2. of *Sexualpathológiai tanulmányok* (Budapest: Aesculap Kiadás, 1934), 75–9.
 33. Nemes-Nagy, *Katasztrófák a szerelmi életben*, 73. The collected data included the following elements: name, place and date of birth; religious affiliation; marital status; occupation; address; place apprehended; nationality; knowledge of languages; female name; inclination; company; height; way of speaking; eyes; mouth; nose; ears; face; hands; hair; moustache; beard; special distinguishing marks; previous criminal record; and three photographs: Nemes-Nagy, *Katasztrófák a szerelmi életben*, 73–4.
 34. Nemes-Nagy, *Katasztrófák a szerelmi életben*, 73.
 35. Sándor Feldmann, *Idegesség és ösztönélet* (Budapest: Novák Rudolf és Társa Tudományos Könyvkiadó, 1928).
 36. Feldman quoted in Kálmán Ruttner, ‘A szekszualitás befolyása a bűnözésre’, in E. Wulffen, W. Steckel and K. Ruttner (eds), *Szekszualis abnormitások és büntettek* (Budapest: Sándor József és társa kiadása, [c. 1930]), available at: http://mtdaportal.extra.hu/books_kulf/wulffen_erich_szekszualis_abnormitasok_es_buntettek.pdf (accessed 5 May 2015).
 37. Helen Meller, *European Cities 1890–1930s: History, Culture and the Built Environment* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2001), 102.
 38. Lyn H. Lofland, *A World of Strangers: Order and Action in Urban Public Space* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).
 39. On the public realm as a unique social psychological space, see Lyn H. Lofland, ‘The Morality of Urban Public Life: the Emergence and Continuation of a Debate’, *Places* vol. 6, no. 1 (1989): 18–23.

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40. 'Homoszexuális egyének bevonultatása munkaszolgálatra (benne névjegyzék a fővárosi lakosokról)', 1942, Hungarian War Archive HM 68763/Eln.1b. – 1942.
41. The State Security Centre was established within the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1942.
42. All quotations from this correspondence relate to the following document: 'Homoszexuális egyének bevonultatása munkaszolgálatra (benne névjegyzék a fővárosi lakosokról)', 1942, Hungarian War Archive HM 68763/Eln.1b. – 1942.
43. I would like to thank Péter Tibor Nagy for sharing this data with me on the basis of a contemporary yearbook of statistics (*Budapest székesfőváros statisztikai évkönyve 1944–1946* (Budapest: Budapest Székesfőváros Statisztikai Hivatala, 1948)).
44. 'Bűnügyi nyilvántartási utasítás', 1958, Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security), Ikt. szám 50–6/5–1958 ABTL.
45. Egészségügyi Tudományos Tanács records 1958, Magyar Országos Levéltár (National Archives of Hungary) XIX–C–8.
46. Országgyűlési irományok, 1958, vol. 1, 270. (Parliamentary documents – original unpublished document, access provided by the Országgyűlési Könyvtár (Library of the Hungarian National Assembly).)
47. Judit Takács, *How to Put Equality into Practice?* (Budapest: New Mandate, 2007) 35. Since 2002, the age of consent has been set at 14 for same-sex as well as mixed-sex sexual relationships.
48. Dr Balázs Tibor, 'A terhelő vagy kompromittáló adatok alapján végrehajtott beszervezések néhány tapasztalata', 1965, BM Központi Tiszti Iskola Rendőrtiszti Akadémia, Politikai Nyomozó Tanszék (Ministry of the Interior, Central School for Officers, Police Academy, Department of Political Investigation), Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security) ABTL A–3802.
49. Budapest Főváros Levéltára (Budapest City Archives), BFL XXIV-1 BRFK.
50. Exceptions include, e.g., Anna Borgos, 'Secret Years: Hungarian Lesbian Herstory, 1950s–2000s', *Aspasia* no. 9 (2015): 87–112; Stella, *Lesbian Lives*.